# The Alberta Post-secondary Performance Envelope

**Revised Performance Envelope Structure**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1997, Alberta's post-secondary performance envelope has awarded over $93 million in both one-time and ongoing funding to the province's publicly funded post-secondary institutions. Alberta was the first jurisdiction in Canada and one of the first in North America to tie funding to institution performance. With implementation, Alberta Learning made a commitment to revise the envelope after a sufficient number of performance allocation cycles had passed.

The current envelope awards funding based on five core indicators related to enrolment, graduate outcomes, administration expenditures and enterprise revenue (refer to first column of table on page 2). In addition to the core indicators, Alberta's research universities (University of Alberta, University of Calgary and The University of Lethbridge) are assessed on four research indicators. The Banff Centre for Continuing Education is assessed on a separate suite of indicators (not presented in this document) that mirror the themes of responsiveness, accessibility and affordability (refer to figure on page 5), yet reflect the institution's unique focus and mandate.

Preliminary consultations on potential revisions to the current performance envelope structure were held with institutions, faculty and student associations in 1999. Further consultations were held in 2000 as part of a wider review completed by the MLA Post-secondary Funding Review Committee. Based on these consultations and subsequent discussions with post-secondary system stakeholders, a draft discussion document containing proposed revisions (refer to second column of table on page 2) was distributed in June 2003. In response to feedback on this document and concerns raised by other stakeholders, the June 2003 proposal was simplified into the structure described in Section 2 (also refer to third column of table on page 2).

A summary of the June 2003 proposed structure and a review of stakeholder response to this structure can be found in Appendices A and B, respectively. Appendix C contains a full description of each indicator proposed for the potential allocation in 2005-06, as well as information on proposed methodological changes to existing indicators.

## 2. STRUCTURE FOR POTENTIAL ALLOCATION IN 2005-06

The performance envelope indicators presented in the third column of the table on page 2 reflect the intended structure for a potential funding allocation in the 2005-06 fiscal year (based on data generated during institutions' 2004-05 academic year).

***Core Indicators:***

In comparison to the current structure, the revised core indicators section has an additional two indicators: completion rate and mandate/business plan specific. All five existing indicators have been retained.

| Current Performance Envelope Structure | | Structure Proposed in June 2003 Discussion Document | | Structure for Potential Allocation in 2005-06 Fiscal Year | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CORE INDICATORS | | CORE INDICATORS | | CORE INDICATORS | |
| Learning Outcomes: | | Learning Outcomes: | | Learning Outcomes: | |
| Increase in FLE credit enrolment | 30 | Increase in FLE credit enrolment | 15 | Increase in FLE credit enrolment | 15 |
| ----- | - | Increase in completion rate | 10 | Completion rate | 15 |
| Graduate satisfaction rate | 30 | Graduate satisfaction rate | 15 | Graduate satisfaction rate | 25 |
| Graduate employment rate | 30 | Graduate employment rate | 15 | Graduate employment rate | 25 |
| ----- | - | Mandate specific indicator I | 10 | Mandate specific indicator | 10 |
| ----- | - | Mandate specific indicator II | 10 | ----- | - |
| ----- | - | Alternative delivery enrolment | 5 | ----- | - |
| ----- | - | Collaborative/brokered enrolment | 5 | ----- | - |
| ----- | - | Space utilization | 5 | | |
| Financial Outcomes: | | Financial Outcomes: | | Financial Outcomes: | |
| Administration expenditures | 5 | Administration expenditures | 5 | Administration Expenditures | 5 |
| Enterprise revenue | 5 | Enterprise revenue | 5 | Enterprise revenue | 5 |
| **Total Available** | **100** | **Total Available** | **100** | **Total Available** | **100** |
| RESEARCH INDICATORS | | RESEARCH INDICATORS | | RESEARCH INDICATORS | |
| Council monetary awards | 40 | Council monetary awards | 30 | Council monetary awards | 25 |
| ----- | - | Commercialization | 10 | Commercialization | 15 |
| Citation impact | 40 | Citation impact | 20 | ----- | - |
| Community and industry support | 25 | Community and industry support | 10 | Community and industry support | 25 |
| Research enterprise | 5 | Research enterprise | 10 | Research enterprise | 5 |
| ----- | - | Publications/FT faculty member | 10 | Publications/FT faculty member | 20 |
| ----- | - | ----- | - | Graduate student completion rate | 10 |
| ----- | - | Increase in graduate enrolment | 10 | ----- | - |
| **Total Available** | **110** | **Total Available** | **100** | **Total Available** | **100** |

In subsequent years, Alberta Learning will continue to work with institutions toward the development of an indicator on Aboriginal completion and an indicator on space utilization to reflect key Alberta Learning policy directions. Additional work will be required to ensure that methodological issues and other concerns are addressed prior to inclusion of these two indicators in a revised performance envelope structure.

***Research Indicators:***

In comparison to the current structure, the revised research indicators section has an additional three indicators: commercialization, publications per full-time faculty member and graduate student completion rate. Three of the four existing research indicators have been retained while the citation impact indicator has been dropped in response to institution concerns regarding scope and relevancy.

The graduate student completion rate indicator was added subsequent to the June 2003 performance envelope proposal in order to complement the undergraduate and certificate/diploma completion rate indicator contained within the core indicators section.

## 3. MANDATE/BUSINESS PLAN SPECIFIC INDICATOR

The inclusion of a mandate/business plan specific indicator will allow institutions to tailor the performance envelope to match their mandate statement and business plan goals. Although institutions will have flexibility in selecting this indicator, some restrictions are necessary to ensure the indicator is appropriate and that development, benchmarking, and measurement processes do not become burdensome.

To implement the mandate/business plan specific indicator, institutions will be asked to identify up to three potential indicators and submit them (and their associated data) to Alberta Learning by July 2004. Indicator selection should be based on the following principles:

1. the indicators must be related to institutions' business plan goals;
2. historical data must be available to allow for benchmarking; and
3. the data must be reliable and come from verifiable sources.

Once institutions have identified up to three potential indicators and submitted historical data to Alberta Learning, Alberta Learning will work with institutions to review the historical data, select the best indicator, and determine benchmarks.

For 2004-05, as an alternative to identifying up to three potential indicators and recognizing the fact that institutions may be in the process of revising their mandates, institutions can identify an existing indicator (either core or research) as their mandate/business plan specific indicator, so long as it relates to their business plan goals.

The Banff Centre for Continuing Education will also need to submit potential indicators and historical data to Alberta Learning to make changes to their current suite of performance envelope indicators.

In future years, it is expected institutions will need to retain their mandate/business plan specific indicator for the duration of their business plan (four years). At the end of this cycle, institutions can select the same indicator, identify an existing indicator (core or research), or submit up to three new indicators (and data) to Alberta Learning for review.

## 4. SAMPLE ALLOCATION OF PERFORMANCE ENVELOPE FUNDS

In providing responses to the June 2003 proposed envelope structure, many institutions were uncertain how performance envelope funding would be allocated. The following example illustrates how funding allocations would occur for a potential allocation in the 2005-06 fiscal year.

First, indicator data would be collected for each institution, matched to benchmarks and points assigned accordingly. The number of points obtained would then be summed to generate an institution score out of 100. To simplify administration, institutions' scores would then be assigned one of four possible weightings based on the table below. Note that this is a change from the current envelope, which uses three weightings (0, 1 and 2).

Institutions scoring 90 points or greater would receive double (2.0 weighting) the level of award, as a proportion of their base operating grant, as institutions scoring 70 to 79 points (1.0 weighting). Similarly, institutions scoring 80 to 89 points would receive 1.5 times the level of award (1.5 weighting), as a proportion of their base operating grant, as institutions scoring 70 to 79 points (1.0 weighting).

| Points | Assigned Weighting | |
|---|---|---|
| | Core | Research |
| 0 to 69 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 70 to 79 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| 80 to 89 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| 90 to 100 | 2.0 | 2.0 |

Note that for an equivalent level of performance, the three research universities do not receive greater funding (as a proportion of their base operating grant) than other institutions. For example, if the University of Alberta received scores of 85 for both the core and research components, they would receive the same award (as a proportion of their base operating grant) as Lakeland College receiving a score of 85.

## 5. CURRENT BENCHMARKS AND POINT ALLOCATIONS

Current benchmarks used to allocate points to the five core indicators and the four research indicators are provided on the following two pages.

In making their recommendations on changes to the performance envelope, the 2000 MLA Post-secondary Funding Review Committee noted that the envelope functioned more as an instrument to accommodate cost pressures than an instrument to encourage

improvements in the delivery of post-secondary education opportunities. To respond further to this concern, Alberta Learning will work with institutions to enhance all benchmarks (including new indicators and indicators subject to methodological changes) to ensure that the revised performance envelope encourages improvement in Alberta's post-secondary learning system.

## LEARNING COMPONENT (For All Institutions):

**RESPONSIVENESS:** *The system will increase its responsiveness to the needs of the individual learners and to the social, economic and cultural needs of the province.*

**1. Employment Rate:**
Percentage of graduate survey respondents employed within a specified period following completion.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 |
| **Benchmarks:** | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% |

**2. Graduate Satisfaction With Overall Quality:**
Percentage of respondents fully/somewhat satisfied with overall quality of educational experience.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 |
| **Benchmarks:** | 70% | 80% | 90% | 95% |

**ACCESSIBILITY:** *The system will encourage and support more accessible life long learning.*

**3. Credit Full Load Equivalent:**
Percentage change in full-load equivalent enrolment from average of 1999-2000 - 2001-2002 to 2002-2003.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | 0 | 20 | 25 | 30 |
| **Benchmarks:** | | | | |
| **- Urban Six** | | **-2%** | **0%** | **+4%** |
| - Other | | -5% | 0% | +4% |

**AFFORDABILITY:** *The system will provide quality learning opportunities to the greatest number of Albertans at a reasonable cost to learner and taxpayer.*

**4. Administration Expenditures:**
Administration expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures less ancillary expenditures (combined average of 2001-2002 and 2002-2003).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Benchmarks:** | | | | |
| **- FLE > 3,500** | | **11%** | **7%** | **5%** |
| - FLE < 3,500 | | 12% | 8% | 6% |

**5. Enterprise Revenue:**
Revenues less all government grants, tuition fees under policy, sponsored research (universities), ancillary services and earned capital contributions as a percentage of Alberta Learning grants (combined average of 2001-2002 and 2002-2003).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Benchmarks:** | | | | |
| **- Urban Six** | | **20%** | **35%** | **50%** |
| - Other | | 10% | 25% | 40% |

**Total Progress Award Points - Learning Component:** **points**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Scoring: | Top Award | 90 < x < 100 | |
| | Second Award | 70 < x < 89 | (second level award is |
| | No Award | 0 < x < 69 | half of top level award) |

## RESEARCH COMPONENT (For Universities):

**RESEARCH EXCELLENCE:** *The system, through its universities, will pursue research excellence to increase access to and development of new knowledge.*

**6. Council Monetary Awards:**
National peer group rank in terms of council awards per full-time faculty member.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | | | |
| - Achievement | 0 | 17 | 25 |
| - Improvement | 0 | 10 | 15 |
| **Benchmarks:** | | Second Third | Top Third |

**7. Citation Impact:**
National peer group rank in terms of number of citations per research publication.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Points:** | | | |
| - Achievement | 0 | 17 | 25 |
| - Improvement | 0 | 10 | 15 |
| **Benchmarks:** | | Second Third | Top Third |

**8. Community and Industry Support:**
National peer group rank in terms of community and industrial funding for sponsored research per full-time faculty member.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Points: | 0 | 17 | 25 |
| Benchmarks: | | Second Third | Top Third |

**9. Research Enterprise:**
National peer group rank in terms of sponsored research revenues as a percent of Alberta Learning grants.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Points: | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Benchmarks: | | Second Third | Top Third |

**Total Progress Award Points - Research Component:** **points**

**Progress Award - Research Component:** **$**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Scoring: | Top Award | 73 < x < 110 | |
| | Second Award | 37 < x < 72 | (second level award is |
| | No Award | 0 < x < 36 | half of top level award) |

## 6. FUNDING TO REWARD SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

The June 2003 proposed performance envelope structure contained two components – one to reward institution performance and one to reward system performance. The formulaic structure of the system performance component was found to be inconsistent with government budgeting processes, specifically in instances where strong system performance would require Treasury Board review and approval of additional funds above those allocated during the annual budget process.

However, Alberta Learning continues to support the concept of rewarding system performance and collaboration. To further this goal, Alberta Learning will prepare documentation on learning system successes as part of annual government-wide budget discussions. This process will allow government to review the successes of Alberta's post-secondary learning system within the full context of annual budget discussions.

## 7. NEXT STEPS

Alberta Learning will work with post-secondary institutions to identify mandate/business plan specific indicators, and in Fall 2004, consult with institutions to establish benchmarks for the new indicators (completion rate, commercialization, publications per full-time faculty member and graduate student completion rate) and revise benchmarks for the existing indicators.

Alberta Learning will also work with the Banff Centre for Continuing Education to make changes to its existing suite of indicators.

Work will also continue on development of Aboriginal completion and space utilization indicators, to be included in future revisions to Alberta's post-secondary performance envelope.

## APPENDIX A – JUNE 2003 PROPOSED ENVELOPE STRUCTURE

The proposed structure was a substantial departure from the current performance envelope. Specifically:

- To acknowledge the Campus Alberta concept and increasing collaboration among Alberta's post-secondary institutions, the envelope was split into two components: System Performance and Institution Performance.
- The System Performance component contained fifteen indicators. Each institution's performance on the fifteen indicators would be aggregated to generate a system level performance result, with funds awarded to each institution based on this overall system level result.
- The remainder of the available performance envelope funding would be allocated based on institutions' individual performance through the Institution Performance component. This second component contained eighteen indicators – eleven core indicators for all institutions and the remaining seven research indicators for the research universities.

| **System Performance Component** | |
|---|---|
| Accessibility | |
| Increase in FLE credit enrolment | 10 |
| Increase in completion rate | 5 |
| Increase in 18-24 age cohort participation rate | 5 |
| Increase in proportion of Aboriginal graduates | 5 |
| Learner and Quality Outcomes | |
| Graduate and employer satisfaction rate | 10 |
| Graduate employment rate | 10 |
| % of Alberta students receiving achievement scholarships | 5 |
| Educational attainment level of Albertans | 5 |
| Affordability and Efficiency | |
| Graduate satisfaction that education benefits worth the cost | 10 |
| Enterprise revenue | 5 |
| Innovation and Partnership | |
| Increase in FLE enrolment in alternative delivery | 5 |
| Increase in non-credit headcount (or non-credit FLE) | 5 |
| Increase in collaborative/brokered enrolment | 5 |
| Research and Knowledge Creation | |
| Research Revenue Generated | 10 |
| Commercialization – licenses as a % of total research | 5 |
| **Total Available** | **100** |

| Institution Performance Component | |
|---|---|
| CORE INDICATORS | |
| Accessibility and Outcomes | |
| Increase in FLE credit enrolment | 15 |
| Increase in completion rate | 10 |
| Learner and Quality Outcomes | |
| Graduate satisfaction rate | 15 |
| Graduate employment rate | 15 |
| Affordability and Efficiency | |
| Administration expenditures | 5 |
| Enterprise revenue | 5 |
| Innovation and Partnership | |
| Increase in FLE enrolment in alternative delivery | 5 |
| Increase in collaborative/brokered enrolment | 5 |
| Improvement in space utilization | 5 |
| Mandate/Business Plan Specific Measures | |
| Improvement in mandate / BP specific indicator I | 10 |
| Improvement in mandate / BP specific indicator II | 10 |
| **Total Available** | **100** |
| RESEARCH INDICATORS | |
| Council monetary awards | 30 |
| Commercialization – licenses as a % of total research | 10 |
| Citation impact | 20 |
| Publications per full-time faculty member | 10 |
| Increase in graduate level enrolment | 10 |
| Community and industry support | 10 |
| Research enterprise | 10 |
| **Total Available** | **100** |

## APPENDIX B – CONCERNS WITH THE JUNE 2003 PROPOSED STRUCTURE

***General comments:***

Overall, institutions indicated widespread support for the principles and goals of the proposed envelope, which included statements on system quality, funding equity, stability and practicality. Institutions also felt the envelope's focus on quality outcomes and institution/sector differences was appropriate, and that performance funding should remain separate from the funding mechanism developed to address inflationary pressures.

Additionally, institutions agreed with the dual structure of the envelope – the System Performance component and the Institutional Performance component. The inclusion of a greater range of indicators was also strongly supported. Institutions were particularly pleased with the mandate/business plan specific indicators because they have the ability to recognize institution diversity in terms of size, location, and client needs.

However, the feedback was not all positive. For example, institutions had concerns with the practicality and relevancy of many indicators including completion rate, Aboriginal graduates, administration expenditures and achievement scholarships. Specifically:

***Increase in FLE credit enrolment:***

Institutions expressed three main concerns. Some felt the indicator was at odds with indicators of alternative delivery and collaborative/brokered enrolments, while others felt that the decrease in weighting (from 30 points in the current envelope to 15 points in the proposed envelope) was too substantial. Additionally, several institutions noted that enrolment increases without funding increases would compromise program quality.

***Increase in completion rate:***

Institutions expressed significant concerns with the current methodology used to generate post-secondary completion rates. Specifically, institutions were concerned that the indicator discounted the value of part-time learning and non-credit instruction, and did not include learners in apprenticeship programs. Additionally, the indicator's focus on program completion was felt to be too rigid, and did not consider those institutions providing alternative delivery and serving unique client groups.

***Increase in 18 to 24 age cohort participation rate:***

Several institutions were concerned with the breadth and relevancy of this indicator. It was felt that measurement of the 18 to 24 age cohort would not allocate rewards for the large (and increasing) numbers of adult learners in the post-secondary system. Additionally, some institutions felt that the 18 to 24 age cohort post-secondary participation rate was more a measure of success of the K-12 system.

***Increase in proportion of Aboriginal graduates:***

Many institutions were concerned with the reliability of an indicator on aboriginal graduates. Institutions expressed the need for a review and/or clarification of reporting mechanisms on Aboriginal students given that Aboriginal self-identification is known to be somewhat unreliable.

***Percent of Alberta students receiving achievement scholarships:***
Similar to the concerns expressed with the 18 to 24 age cohort participation rate, institutions felt that the achievement scholarship indicator was more a measure of success of the K-12 system than the post-secondary system. Additionally, some institutions were concerned with the narrow focus on Heritage scholarship system data.

***Educational attainment level of Albertans:***
A few institutions were concerned that this measure would be influenced more by the strength of Alberta's economy and its ability to draw individuals with post-secondary credentials from other provinces than success of the post-secondary system in supporting students through to program completion. Additionally, some institutions felt the measure duplicated the increase in completion rate indicator.

***Administration expenditures:***
Institutions felt that this indicator required clarification given that the link between administration expenditures and efficiency was considered to be unclear. Smaller institutions argued that economies of scale impacted their ability to reach benchmarks, while several felt that the indicator could easily be distorted through accounting practices.

***Improvement in space utilization:***
Significant concern was expressed with this indicator. Institutions were uncertain how it would be measured, noting that utilization rates are influenced by market demand and are highly variable depending on the size of the institution, its location and mandate. Additionally, some institutions felt the indicator was not a valid measure of accessibility given trends towards increasing alternative delivery and collaborative/brokered arrangements.

***Research indicators:***
Within the research indicators section of the Institution Performance component, there were various concerns with the seven proposed indicators. Universities were concerned with the graduate enrolment indicator – suggesting that many external factors had the ability to substantially impact graduate student enrolment. Additionally, concern was expressed with the commercialization indicator, given that not all research has commercial applications, and the citation impact indicator, given that citation counts are considered to be too focused on scientific fields.

Feedback from colleges and technical institutes on the research indicators was mixed, some institutions were concerned that they were excluded from the research indicator section of the Institution Performance component, while others were concerned that research indicators were included in the System Performance component even though most institutions could not contribute to these measures.

## APPENDIX C –INDICATORS AND CHANGES IN METHODOLOGY

***Increase in credit FLE enrolment:*** the year-to-year percent increase in credit FLE enrolment based on a three-year rolling average. Data are obtained through Alberta Learning's Learner Enrolment Reporting System (LERS). Adjustments will be made to properly allocate enrolments in brokered programs.

***Graduate satisfaction rate:*** the proportion of surveyed graduates who are neutral, somewhat satisfied, and fully satisfied with the overall quality of their educational experience. Data are obtained through the Alberta Learning biennial graduate outcomes survey.

Starting with the survey administered in 2005-06 (on 2003-04 graduates), the satisfaction question will change from a five-point scale (includes a neutral response) to a four-point scale (no neutral response). Satisfied graduates will no longer include neutral respondents. Alberta Learning will work with institutions to address any concerns they have with this change in methodology. Survey results will affect potential performance envelope award allocations for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

***Graduate employment rate:*** the proportion of surveyed graduates who are in the labour force and employed (in both related and unrelated employment). Data will be obtained through the Alberta Learning biennial graduate outcomes survey.

Starting with the survey administered in 2005-06 (on 2003-04 graduates), the graduate employment rate will be revised to only include those respondents who indicate related employment. Alberta Learning will work with institutions to address any concerns they have with this change in methodology, including adjustments to existing benchmarks. Survey results will affect potential performance envelope award allocations for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

***Administration Expenditures:*** the total administration expenditures reported in institutions' audited financial statements, less expenditures for ancillary and business enterprises, as a proportion of total expenditures. Data are obtained through Alberta Learning's Financial Information Reporting System (FIRS).

Alberta Learning is working on methodological changes to this indicator and will work with institutions to address any concerns once the changes have been identified.

***Enterprise revenue:*** the total revenue reported in institutions' audited financial statements, less revenues from tuition fees (as defined in the Tuition Fee Policy), government operating grants, government sponsored research, ancillary revenues and earned capital contributions. Data are obtained through FIRS.

Similar to the indicator on administration expenditures, Alberta Learning is working on methodological changes to enterprise revenue and will work with institutions to address any concerns once the changes have been identified.

***Completion rate:*** the completion rate for certificate, diploma, and four-year undergraduate programs, measured as the proportion of the entry-level cohort (full-time entrants) that completes their program within three years following normal program completion length. Data are obtained through LERS.

***Council monetary awards:*** the national peer group rank of council awards per full-time faculty based on a three-year rolling average. Data are obtained by the University of Alberta (through contact with the various granting councils) and provided to Alberta Learning. Note that currently, 25 of the 40 points are assigned based on institution achievement while the remaining 15 points are assigned based on institution performance compared to the prior year figure (improvement).

Starting with the potential performance envelope allocation for the 2005-06 fiscal year, the improvement component of this indicator will no longer be included.

***Community and industry support:*** the national peer group rank of community and industrial research funding per full time faculty based on a three-year rolling average. Reflects research revenue generated through non-government and non-granting council sources. Data are obtained through the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO).

***Research enterprise:*** the national peer group rank of total research revenue as a percentage of provincial operating grants. Data are obtained through CAUBO.

To retain an improvement component to the revised performance envelope, Alberta Learning is modifying this indicator from an achievement to an improvement measure. Improvement will be based on a change in the three year rolling average of total research revenue as a percentage of provincial operating grants. Data will be obtained through CAUBO.

***Publications per full-time faculty member:*** the number of publications per full-time faculty member based on a three-year rolling average. Data will be obtained in consultation with the research universities.

***Graduate student completion rate:*** the completion rate for masters and earned doctorate programs, measured as the proportion of the entry-level cohort (full-time entrants) that completes their program within three years following normal program completion length. Data are obtained through LERS.

***Commercialization:*** the national peer group rank of license revenue as a percentage of total research revenue based on a three-year rolling average. Data will be obtained in consultation with the research universities.